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Should Teachers Be Able To Carry Guns in School

A series of unfortunate incidents associated with gun possession has led to the call for the strengthening of gun laws in the United States and the call for teachers to be allowed to carry guns to school. On January 20, in Winston Salem, North Carolina, A Winston-Salem State University football player, Najee Ali Baker, was shot to death at a party on the campus of Wake Forest University. It's been 24 weeks since 2018, and there have been 23 school shootings already in the U.S. and someone has been injured or killed. It averages more than one school shooting a week. Evelyn (1) points out that, the right to gun ownership is a highly debated issue in the US. Some argue that gun possession is an important part of the country's heritage and that it is a birthright. On the other side, critics argue that civilians have no justifiable reason to own guns. Despite the arguments from both sides of the divide, experience has led to the realization that teachers are not supposed to carry guns to school.

The cases of violence by use of guns has been on the rise with research indicating that over thirty-eight thousand people in 2016 were murdered using guns. In addition, gunshot wounds account for at least 93 deaths in the US (Berlin 1). The US is the country with the highest rate of homicides caused by guns and number of "firearms per capita" as compared to the other developed nations (Masters4). In order to reduce these incidences, laws regarding gun control have been put in place. The reason given for control laws is that "gun control laws aim to restrict or regulate the

sale, purchase, or possession of firearms through licensing, registration or identification requirements”.

These laws have received a wave of different reactions from the people especially since the US second amendment of the constitution advocates for possession of guns as an inalienable right for a free and secure. Apart from the Gun control laws, the Supreme Court has also endorsed restrictions in regards to firearms as well as the Brady Handgun Violent Prevention Act which also decrees a background check as a requirement when purchasing a firearm (Master 2-4).

Research indicates that personal interest is the key influence on people's perspective on these firearm laws and whether they support or oppose them. For example, a research by Jacobs indicated that a subgroup (white male) in the country do not support the laws since they consider rifles as a “sacred object” and associates the ownership of rifles to authority and strength (Jacobs 2). Therefore, this group views gun control laws as a way of stripping off these qualities from them (Jacob 2). Additionally, place of residence, gender, age, and political ideologies are other major factors that influence the attitude that an individual has towards these laws e.g. increase in age indicates an upsurge in support of gun control laws (Pederson et al. 280).

Although citizens believe that these rifles increase their safety, their availability in a region is directly related to the ability of criminals to access them which consequently increases the susceptibility of the community to crime. However, some researchers argue that there has been no direct relationship between the gun control laws and overall reduction of the rate of crimes. According to Parrillo, this inference can be attributed to the fact that gun control laws tend to reduce the levels of ownership in specific groups but not the whole population and only specific rifles are targeted i.e. handguns as compared to the long guns (Parrillo 423).

On the other hand, some researchers argue that gun control laws have helped reduce the rate of crimes related to violence e.g. homicide. The Gun law website state that since the implementation of these laws, there has been a decline of 10% of violent crimes annually. Likewise, the states that supported and instigated the carry laws recorded a decrease in crime rates i.e. 5% decrease in rapes, 3% decrease in robbery, 8.5% decrease in murder and 7% decrease in assault ("Gunlaw.com" 5).

There should be uniformity in the federal laws that govern firearms handling among citizens in all states. This will reduce the leakage of firearms from states with feebler control laws to those with strong ones. Responsibility should be emphasized to every gun owner in terms of appropriate stowage to avoid the rifles from falling into the wrong hands. Gun control laws should also be given a chance to be fully effected in order to measure their actual impact on the society.

The United States has implemented a number of changes in gun possession regulations over the last few years. These changes have lessened the strictness of the regulations. It is now possible for citizens to conceal firearms and carry them without undergoing any training. The changes in regulations were made in an attempt to meet the need to protect the second amendment rights of the people. The gun problem is, in fact, the most serious American issue. Around 30,000 Americans die each year from guns, more than 60 percent of which are deaths from suicide and an average of about 8,000 deaths per year (Dezenski 42). This is not a matter of the gross itself, but rather a problem that reveals the social and political problems of the United States and the problems and weaknesses of the system.

Gun violence at school has been on the rise over the last few years. Why is the gun-related violence rising? "A number of reasons have been cited for the emergence of this disturbing phenomenon. Some of these include the widespread availability of guns, escalating

levels of violence in video games and media violence and rising levels of teen alienation and rage." (TMW Media Group 1). The reason why gun accidents and gun-related crimes continue to rise in the United States is that guns can be bought and carried easily anytime, anywhere. In the United States, the law prohibits underage buyers under 21 from buying alcohol or selling alcohol to them. Nonetheless, the gun, which is commonly used for hunting, can be bought by anyone at the age of 18 and above. That is, teenagers can easily own guns, too. Everyone knows that it is never a light crime to have students hurt or killed in gun crimes. An average of 2,300 students died each year from 2010 to 2016.

There is a lot of controversy over why guns cannot be regulated when many innocent lives are exposed to crime due to firearms. The United States is now noisy over gun control issues. On February 15, 2018, 17 people were killed in a random shooting in 6 minutes and 20 seconds at a high school in Parkland, Florida, U.S. This was enough to ignite the old gun ownership debate. This year alone, the town gun safety group says 18 shootings have already occurred in schools, including the incident, and six others have been injured.

Gun Control Laws

In order to ensure security, teachers should be denied the right of having guns in school, the best solution would be to enforce and strengthen gun control laws. About 22% of American citizens own one or more firearms. The gun culture of America is attributed to the colonial history, the second amendment and revolutionary roots. According to the second amendment "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a Free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." (O'Shea 112).

No matter the interpretation of the second amendment, debates will always arise when it comes to the scope of its provisions on firearm possession. There are many compelling reasons why gun control is needed. The first reason is that as long as people are in possession of firearms, they can be stolen used by criminals to commit crimes. Secondly, countries with gun control regulations have far much fewer incidents of gun violence. Gun violence is also known to have huge costs in the country (Kleck 59). People require a safe environment that can only be assured by gun control laws (Lott 55).

Teachers and Gun possession

President Trump said, "Gun crime usually ends within three minutes, but it takes five to eight minutes for the police to arrive. What if about 20 percent of the school's teachers were trained and trained to carry guns?" He said this as a way to prevent school shootings. And many educators, including the National Education Association (NEA), opposed his proposal. America is a country of plutocracy. The President and most Republicans are backed by the NRA. So, despite all the opposition, Trump said, "If you have a teacher who's good at guns, you can end the gun attacks very quickly and well. If the teacher had hidden the gun, they would be deployed under special training, and the gun ban would be removed, "eventually raising NRA's hand. Also, on March 7, the state of Florida passed a bill that allows teachers to arm their guns. I am against this measure and this legislation, which can lead to many problems and side effects. First of all, the more people have guns in school, the more likely it is to have a safety accident. Even a reputable teacher in school, having a gun can make a difference.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau statistics, the US topped the list in firearms per capita. The country was also ranked at number five on the number of gun-related homicides. On average, there are about eighty-six guns for every one hundred American citizens. The Sale of

guns to minors under the age of 18 years is prohibited by the "Gun Control Act of 1968." Other groups prohibited by the same act include the military personnel that has been dishonorably discharged, the mentally disabled and people with criminal records. The federal law acts as the minimum level of standard for firearm regulations in the country. States can always create their own regulations based on their perception of inhabitants (Hepburn 15).

Debates on whether the gun control laws are too relaxed have been in existence since the past decade. School shootings have been on the rise since the Columbine incident that happened in 1999. Later came the Aurora Movie shooting incident that led to 70 injuries and 12 deaths. The Sandy Hook massacre as well, an incident that led to 20 deaths of elementary students and the death of 6 adults. It was in the light of these incidents that the Obama administration began focusing on ways to strengthen gun control. The plan proposed by the administration was to conduct background checks for firearm sales, limit ammunition magazines and strengthen the ban on assault weapons among others. Despite the efficiency of the plan, little was done about it.

According to CBS news (1), a teacher was detained after barricading himself in a classroom in northwest Georgia and fired a shot. This happened at Dalton High School at around 11:30 a.m. The teacher, Mr. Davidson was described as a good teacher. It's important to note that the reason Davidson shot was not that he wanted to hurt anyone, and according to the principal, this teacher has been a great teacher since 2004. The incident shows that even a teacher who usually has no problems can cause unexpected situations as soon as he or she has a gun. As well as diligent teachers, trained teachers can cause accidental accidents.

On March 14, a police teacher, Dennis Alexander, was shot accidentally in a classroom training session on gun-related safety in Monterey County, California. While only three people were slightly injured when the gun was fired, it can easily lead to a vertiginous

event that could cause a fatal accident. The crash shows that there is no objective reason for trained teachers to catch criminals and reduce victims, and it can cause a variety of accidents. Trump's proposed gun control plan is not preventing gun accidents, but rather increases the volume of total sales, which could increase the rate of accidents. After the Florida high school shooting incident, President Trump wrote on Twitter that "there were numerous signs that the Florida shooter was mentally ill, " even being expelled from school because of his bad and bizarre behavior. He blamed the attacker's mental health, not gun control, for "his neighbors and classmates knew he had a big problem." Although the reporter asked about gun control during the press conference, he didn't say a word about gun control.

Independent reporter Joan Smith argued, "The psychological frustration of teenagers is everywhere, but it is only possible in the United States to develop a shooting spree." He wrote that "If a social-pattern criminal took a knife instead of a gun, the victim could not be so large, and the victims could have overwhelmed him." Richard Wolfe of Newsweek also pointed out, "Guns murder is happening everywhere in the world, but mass murder is a phenomenon unique to the United States." Gun ownership has always been a controversial subject in the US even though it is deeply rooted in the constitution and the history of the country. The Second Amendment provides rights to Americans by stating that "the right to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." The regulation of this right has been a battle between the political and judicial sectors of the country (Cox and Rich 1).

Though there are a number of regulations on gun control, they are plagued with major loopholes. According to Pérez-peña (2015), Licensed gun dealers are supposed to have their clients get a background check that is run through the F.B.I database. Such a check ensures that they do not belong to the category of people prohibited from gun ownership. The loophole in this

regulation is that small-scale sellers are not required to conduct such background checks.

Another loophole is that there are incomplete criminal case listings on the database. Another regulation with loop loopholes is that of the mental illness. "It prohibits gun possession by a person adjudicated as a mental defective by a court or other authority." The problem with this is that most individuals with mental illness do not have such adjudications. Others have it reversed through court petitions. Statistics also show that there has been a lot of mass shooting by people said to be mentally ill yet they somehow managed to own a gun legally.

The presence of so many loopholes in gun regulations is a clear indication that gun laws need to be strengthened. As of 1994-2004, there were federal laws that banned the selling of assault rifles as well as high-capacity magazines. However, these laws expired and are yet to be renewed. There are some states with bans on assault weapons but such bans are only applicable in those states. Most of the gun control regulations are at the state level. The most restrictive states include Illinois, New York, Hawaii, Maryland, Rhode Island, and New Jersey. Some states have gone a step ahead to introduce stringent background checks that are more restrictive than the federal ones (Pérez-peña, 2015) Stopping shooters at school should not be left at the hands of the school administration. The police should step in and ensure that gun possession is controlled in schools. In a country with over 250,000,000 guns, it is not possible for schools to address the challenge of shootings without help from the government.

The public in the U.S is sharply divided on gun control issues. Over the last two decades, the support for gun law strengthening by American citizens has reduced significantly despite the rise in mass shootings. Even though an increase in restrictions has been called upon after several high profile shootings, the efforts have proved futile. Pérez-peña, (2015) states that a high percentage of people support the conduct of background checks on individuals interested in

owning a gun. Most people also support keeping guns off mentally ill people. The divide on gun control regulations does not only exist among the public but also the enforcement authorities. It is common for big-city chiefs of police to support enforcement of gun control laws while small-town sheriffs and police chiefs oppose it. The Northeast enforcement authorities will most likely favor gun control while the South and West authorities will most likely oppose the idea.

Given the number of deaths associated with guns in the U.S., allowing teachers to possess guns at school would exacerbate the problem. It can, however, be concluded that strengthening of gun laws would significantly reduce gun-related incidents. The background check should be intensified and all loopholes should be addressed. Small-scale sellers should also be required to conduct a background check on their clients. The law enforcement authorities should also address the loopholes associated with mental illness. Gun owners are also supposed to undergo safety training and education on gun handling. Any efforts to arm teachers at school should also face harsh opposition to prevent increasing the shooting incidents at schools.

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